

# INDIANA RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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"Partners Working for Rural Indiana"



June 30, 2004

On behalf of the Indiana Rural Development Council I would like to thank you for the interest in the Rural Regional Partnership Program. The Indiana General Assembly established the Rural Development Council Fund (IC 4-49.5-4) in part to: *Provide funding for the establishment of new regional rural development groups and the operations of existing regional rural development groups.*

Please find enclosed a copy of the Rural Regional Partnership Program grant guidelines as well as a separate cover page to be used with your grant application. **Grant applications will be accepted now through 5:00 pm on Tuesday, August 31, 2004.** All pertinent information regarding deadlines and procedures can be found in these materials.

If you have any questions please contact me at [dkoverman@commerce.state.in.us](mailto:dkoverman@commerce.state.in.us) or 317-232-8776 or Sarah Yeager at [syeager@commerce.irdc.in.us](mailto:syeager@commerce.irdc.in.us) or 317-234-3418. We appreciate your interest and hope you find the enclosed information and application valuable to you and your organization.

Sincerely,

Don Koverman  
Executive Director  
Indiana Rural Development Council



## **RURAL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**



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# **2004 CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**Receipt Deadline:  
August 31, 2004**

The Rural Regional Partnership Program is a competitive grant program that provides for the establishment of new regional rural development groups and the operations of existing regional rural development groups through the funding of organizational capacity building projects in the areas of job creation/retention/workforce development, agricultural development, infrastructure, housing, health care, local planning, land use, leadership, social/cultural issues, education and technology.

## **RURAL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In July 2001 the Indiana General Assembly asked the Indiana Rural Development Council (IRDC) to develop a rural economic development strategy to assist Indiana's rural residents to improve their quality of life and to help promote successful and sustainable rural communities. During 2002 many individuals and organizations, all deeply interested in the economic future of rural Indiana, voluntarily participated in focus group discussions. **As a result a variety of needs were identified in 10 specific issue areas including job creation/retention/workforce development, infrastructure, housing, health care, local planning, land use, leadership, agricultural development, social/cultural issues, education and technology.** Despite the varying perspectives four common themes emerged from these discussions:

- Leadership Development
- Planning (in economic development, technology, or education)
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Flexibility

In October of 2002 the Indiana Rural Development Council presented the Rural Economic Development Strategy (REDS) report to the state legislature. Then during their 2003 session, the Indiana General Assembly approved funding (IC 4-4-9.5-4) to support the establishment of new regional rural development groups and the operations of existing regional rural development groups.

### **CONTENTS**

This document provides for the implementation of IC 4-4-9.5-4, now entitled the Rural Regional Partnership Program.. The enclosed packet consists of:

Part I. Rules and Regulations - This section includes definitions, applicant and project eligibility requirements, identified needs, grant amounts and deadlines, as well as the application evaluation and approval process, and reporting requirements of grantees.

Part II. Application Instructions - This section includes the forms required for completing an application.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For further information or to receive a copy of the Rural Economic Development Strategy report contact:

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One North Capitol, Suite 600  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone: (317) 232-8776  
Email: [dkoverman@commerce.state.in.us](mailto:dkoverman@commerce.state.in.us)

## **PART I. RULES AND REGULATIONS**

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### **Section 1. Definitions:**

- 1.1. **Act.** The Act refers to IC 4-4-9.5-4 Rural Development Council Fund. This act provides funding for the establishment of new regional rural development groups and the operations of existing regional rural development groups. This new funding program is now entitled the Rural Regional Partnership Program.
- 1.2. **Application Evaluation Panel.** A 3-5 member panel, comprised of IRDC Council members and community development specialists responsible for evaluating and making grant recommendations to the Indiana Rural Development Council.
- 1.3. **Director.** The Director means the Executive Director of the Indiana Rural Development Council.
- 1.4. **Eligible Applicants.** Eligible applicants include any combination of communities, counties, units of government, economic development service providers, and nonprofit organizations representing a minimum of a ten (10) contiguous county area (unless applicant can justify the waiving of the 10 contiguous county area criteria). All applicants will be asked to identify their collaboration/partnership as either Type I. “Start-up”, Type II. “New” or Type III. “Established” as well as comply with other criteria as identified in Section 3 Applicant and Project Eligibility Requirements.
- 1.5. **Grant Request.** Applicants may request up to \$300,000.00 per application.
- 1.6. **Grantor.** The Grantor means the Indiana Rural Development Council.
- 1.7. **Identified Needs.** Needs refers to the ten (10) issue areas as identified in the Rural Economic Development Strategy (REDS) report.
- 1.8. **No Match Requirement.** The overall purpose of the RDC Fund is to stimulate, strengthen, and enhance rural collaborations. Although a “no match” requirement has been established, the grantor recognizes no sustainable initiative will occur without all partners tangibly contributing to the collaboration. Therefore successful applications will need to clearly identify all contributions (both cash and in-kind) made by the partnering entities.
- 1.9. **Organizational Capacity Building.** The act of building or expanding the future capacity of a new regional rural development group or the operations of an existing regional rural development group.
- 1.10. **Project.** Activities that promote organizational capacity building in the areas of job creation/retention/work force development, agricultural development, infrastructure, housing, leadership development, health care, land use, local planning, social/cultural issues, and technology/education. Projects should be completed at least eighteen (18) months from the signing of the grant agreement.
- 1.11. **Program Year.** For purposes of the Act, the program year shall coincide with the State Of Indiana’s fiscal year of July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 1.12. **Purposes.** Purposes refer to the legislative purposes specified in IC 4-4-9.5-4 Rural Development Council Fund.

- 1.13. **Recipient.** The organization, identified within the collaborative application, who has been selected to receive grant funds through the Act.
- 1.14. **Sustainability.** The ability to perpetuate the project after the grant funds from this Act are spent.

## **Section 2. Needs Identified:**

At the conclusion of the REDS initiative there was a clear recognition that now more than ever citizens and leaders need to look beyond their own organizations in order to address the many challenges facing our rural communities. Often these issues are complex and best addressed in groups. In this way, the strengths of each organization and community are capitalized and a synergy of efforts emerge. Human capital and financial resources must be shared among entities to take full advantage of innovation and experience. For this reason rural communities should look for opportunities to partner and leverage resources on a regional basis.

- 2.1. **Planning (in economic development, technology, education).** Communities, organizations, and governments must look ahead to determine the impact of today's decisions and actions.

Economic Development - Rural communities must actively engage in planning for economic development. Economic development includes many issues, such as agricultural development, land use, workforce development, infrastructure (e.g. housing, water and waste water treatment systems), social/cultural issues (e.g. health care) and quality of life

Technology - The technological revolution (e.g. telecommunication) has made it less important where workers live, opening up opportunities for rural areas. To be competitive, rural residents and businesses must have access to electronic connectivity that bridges the digital divide. Local and regional planning for access to this infrastructure is critical for rural areas to take advantage of this opportunity.

Education - Planning for a quality elementary, secondary and post secondary education system that addresses the needs of students-young and old-is critical but often difficult because of the necessary involvement from several levels and sectors. The education and training system must create a skilled workforce adaptable to change and ready for a lifetime of learning opportunities.

- 2.2. **Leadership Development.** Visionary leaders are key for rural communities to address quality of life issues. Leadership is essential to adjusting to a landscape that includes new demographics of rural Indiana, such as changing farm conditions, bank consolidations, challenges to small rural businesses posed by large national stores and the global challenges to manufacturing jobs. Leaders must educate the whole community, facilitate the discussions, and forge collaborative solutions to these challenges. Leadership capacity, both elected and non-elected, is the foundation of strong economic and community development. A successful leadership development strategy includes three components, the identification and recruitment of leaders, providing leadership development training, and the allocation of adequate funding to support leadership development training.
- 2.3. **Collaboration/Partnership Development.** Rural leaders and the agencies and organizations serving rural areas need to look beyond their own geographical and institutional silos. Typically, the rhetoric about partnering and collaboration exceeds the reality. Although partnerships and collaborative approaches are expected in the other two priority areas (i.e., planning and leadership development) there is also the stand-alone need for multiple agencies and organizations to *consciously* exam and plan how they can

work together on a *continual* basis to better serve rural people and places. Explicit efforts are needed to create shared visions and organizational paradigms, to change organizational cultures, and to create new ways of doing business. Examples of outcomes from this type of targeted organizational and agency focus include: integrated plans of work and service delivery; significant enhancement in communications and coordination; reduced overhead in the delivery of services and programs; joint budgeting and sharing of resources, including personnel, among agencies and organizations; removal of institutional barriers that inhibit collaboration and partnering; collaborative decision making across agencies and organizations; co-location of offices; and jointly securing and managing resources to fill existing gaps in service delivery.

### **Section 3. Applicant and Project Eligibility Requirements:**

- 3.1. **Applicant Eligibility.** Eligible applicants can include any group of communities, counties, agencies of governments, economic development service providers, and nonprofit organizations representing a minimum of a ten (10) contiguous county area. Applicants submitting proposals that do not meet the “contiguous” requirement must clearly justify the waiving of the criteria and will be asked to identify the collaborative efforts of their group into one of three types:
- a. Support the establishment of a new regional rural development group:
    - Type I. “Start-up” – A group just beginning to explore the possibilities of a future collaboration/partnership.
  - b. Support the operations of an existing regional rural development group:
    - Type II. “New” – A group who has been actively collaborating for 1 – 5 years.
    - Type III. “Established” – A group who has been actively collaborating for 6 or more years.
  - c. Each applicant (of the minimum 10 contiguous county area) should have representation from each of the following categories: local/county elected officials, economic and/or community development organizations, agricultural practitioners, university faculty (including the Purdue Extension Service), other significant rural development resource organizations (both public and/or private sector) operating within the group’s jurisdiction.
  - d. Each applicant will operate through a collaboration team consisting of the following:
    - Type I. “Start-up” – This collaboration team must include at least three (3) different organizations represented from the list identified in Section 3.1.c.
    - Type II. “New” and Type III. “Established” – This partnership team must include at least ten (10) different organizations represented from the list identified in Section 3.1.c.
  - e. Address one or more of the issues as discussed in Section 2. Needs Identified.
  - f. Be sustainable.

### **Section 4. Grant Amount, Application Deadlines and Funding Announcements:**

- 4.1. **Grant Amount.** The Indiana Rural Development Council will provide up to \$300,000.00 for each awarded regional group application.. Seventy-five (75%) of the grant award will be available to the lead organization upon final approval of the grant agreement. The

remaining twenty-five (25%) of the award will be released when the final project expenditure reports have been filed and approved by the Grantor.

4.2. The Grantor reserves the right to reject, partially fund, or modify submitted applications.

4.3. **Application Deadlines.** Applications will be accepted from July 1, 2004 through August 31, 2004.

4.4. **Funding Announcements.** Public funding announcements will be made approximately 60 days after the application has been submitted. The Lt. Governor will make a formal notification of the grant award via a letter. A representative may contact an applicant before this time with preliminary information about the status of the grant application. Media Announcements on the awards will be issued by the Grantor, and applicants are required to keep the award confidential until that announcement is made.

### **Section 5. Grant Restrictions and Reporting Requirements:**

5.1. **Non-Discrimination.** All recipients of grant funds must adhere to all state and federal civil rights rules and regulations. Generally, recipients agree that they will not discriminate based upon race, sex, creed, color, age, national origin, or disability. The specific rules and regulations will be outlined and agreed to by the recipient in the funding agreement

5.2. **Project Reports/Ineligible Expenses.** The recipient must file a six month progress report, and a final report (in hard copy and electronic format) with a signed expenditure report 90 days after the end of the grant period to the Director. In the event grant reports and supporting documents are not received by the Director, the grant contract will be considered in default; and any remaining grant distributions will be forfeited and recipient will be required to repay all amounts that have previously been received for this grant. All travel and per diem must be according to state guidelines and applicants will be responsible for following all ineligible expense guidelines as identified in the grant agreement.

### **Section 6. Application and Evaluation Process:**

6.1. **Application Process.** The application must be submitted on both paper form and CD or diskette. The form is available on IRDC's website at [www.state.in.us/irdc](http://www.state.in.us/irdc) or by calling 317-232-8776 or 317-234-3418. Applicants may re-submit applications for non-funded projects. These applications may be revised or resubmitted as previously written. The time line of the project must be updated from the last submission.

6.2. **Application Evaluation Process.** The project evaluation process will include the following:

- a. Applications will be reviewed by the Grantor for completeness, as well as applicant and project eligibility. Incomplete and/or ineligible applications will be returned to the applicant and not considered for funding in that round. Eligible applications will be provided to the Application Evaluation Panel for consideration.
- b. For each application, an Application Evaluation Panel will be constituted by the Director for the purpose of reviewing, evaluating, and making grant recommendations to the Indiana Rural Development Council. The panel will review and evaluate each eligible

application on the following criteria:

- Support the establishment of a new regional rural development group (Type I. “Start-up”) or the operations of an existing regional rural development group ) Type II. “New”, and Type III. “Established”).
- Consist of a regional collaboration/partnership representing a minimum of ten (10) contiguous counties.
- Contain a collaborative team representing a specific number of different partner areas (see Section 3.1.c.).
- Address one or more of the issues as discussed in Section 2. Needs Identified
- Demonstrate sustainability.

After the Application Evaluation Panel’s review and evaluation, their recommendations will be forwarded to the Indiana Rural Development Council for final decisions.

6.2. **Application Process.** Applicants will respond to the following questions/request for information. Full applications must be typed. The minimum font size is 12 point, double spaced. Please limit items B through J to a total of 10 pages.

- A. Cover Page. (Please use the attached cover page only).
- B. Please describe the partnership/collaboration and the impact of this group upon the region?
- C. List the goals of the collaboration. Identify benchmarks and how they will be documented.
- D. How will the project help to implement the Rural Economic Development Strategy report as described in Section 2. Needs Identified?
- E. If you have identified your initiative as a Type I. “Start-up” or Type II. “New”, please analyze your planning process and describe the key elements that comprise that process. If Type III. “Established”, please provide us with your initiative’s history and accomplishments.
- F. How will the collaboration/partnership be sustained? How will you demonstrate that sustainability?
- G. Please identify the area or region (minimum of 10 counties) represented by this collaboration and how the area will be served (list communities, counties or other geographic descriptions).
- H. Detail the partnership that will support this project. Provide names of communities, organizations, and agencies participating in the partnership. Please attach letters of commitment from each collaboration/partner that clearly identifies committed resources. Please attach letters as an appendix to the application.
- I. Please provide a time line for this project.
- J. Please describe the impact to your region if the collaboration/partnership is not funded.
- K. Please use the attached budget page to detail your collaboration.



